

### Ground broken for new River Project office

*By: Tom Saul, QC Times*

**Washington, Jan 14** - The crushed gravel and flattened soil were frozen so solid that Don Swanson broke out one of the gold shovels to put down a long mound of sand so there would be something for those involved in Monday's groundbreaking to dig into.

When the new U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Mississippi River Project Office building at river's edge in Pleasant Valley, Iowa, is finished by Swanson Construction of Bettendorf in about a year, the agency will be able to run much more smoothly, Col. Robert Sinkler said.

"Now, they are scattered at different locations," Sinkler said of the office that coordinates a number of functions for a 314-mile stretch of the river centered in the Quad-Cities. "It will give us a facility that will allow us to better integrate technology and our efforts with other federal, state and local entities."

The office is responsible for oversight of the activities of about 300 federal employees who operate and maintain navigation channels and structures, look out for natural resources and ecosystems on the river, repair federal flood-control projects, maintain recreation areas and assist with emergency response during natural disasters.

The \$2 million structure is on federal property adjacent to Lock and Dam 14, a recreation area and the Smith's Island National Recreation Trail, all off 182nd Street in Pleasant

Valley. It was chosen because the land was available at no cost to the Army Corps, Sinkler said.

U.S. Rep. Bruce Braley, D-Iowa, participated in the groundbreaking. He called the Mississippi River the most important natural resource in the region in terms of its potential for economic development and job creation.

"This shows what an enormous impact it can have on the area," he said.